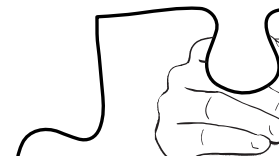
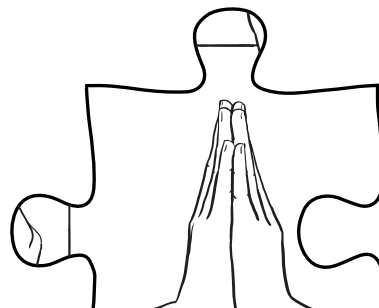
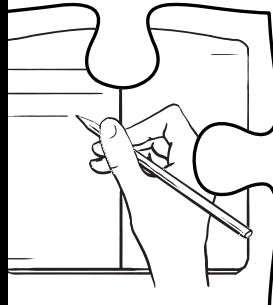
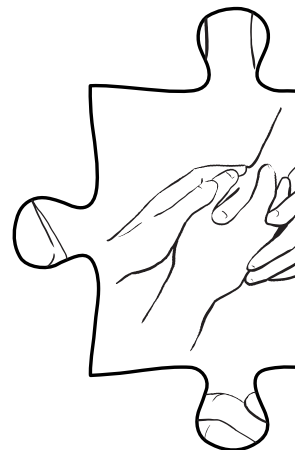
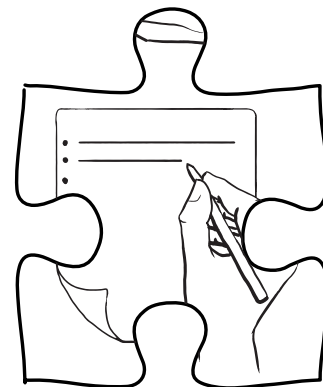
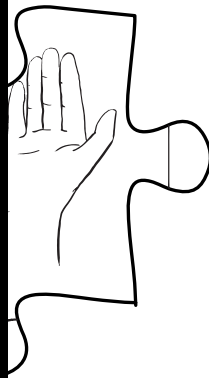
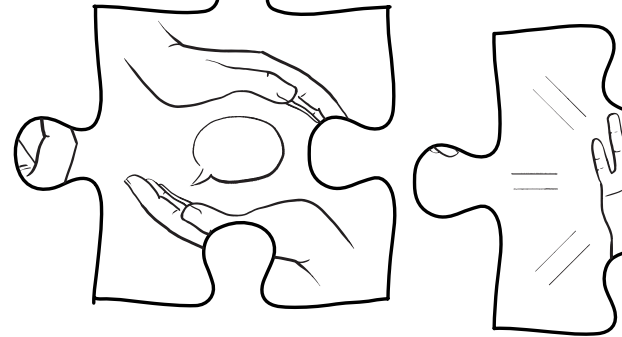
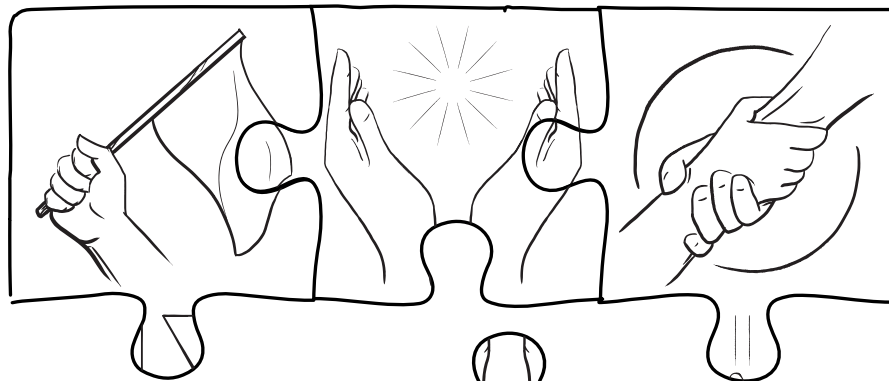
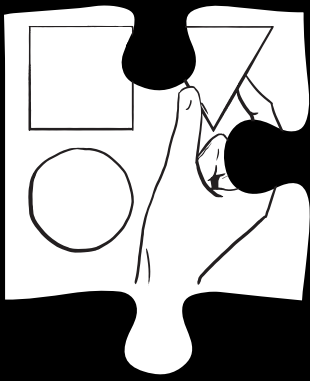


EXODUS STEPWORK PROGRAMME

STEP FOUR

“We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.”



“We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.”

In the 4th Step, we inventory (i.e., **take stock of**) our **past and present selves**, exploring our **significant life experiences**, examining our **beliefs and thinking patterns**, acknowledging our **deepest feelings**, and assessing our **behaviour**.

The aim of this **journey of self-discovery** is to arrive at a **comprehensive, realistic picture** of ourselves, as we truly are, to create a **platform for self-improvement**. Steps 1 to 3 have revealed to us that there are **areas of our lives** that need **consideration, care and repair**. We may be able to identify some of these areas, however, it is likely that there are others that we are **not aware of** yet. Thus far in our lives, **denial has kept us blinded** to many truths.

Once we have a **complete, accurate understanding** of ourselves, **we can decide** which **aspects of our character** we would like to **keep**, which aspects **need nurturing**, and which we would be **better off without**. In this way, Step 4 takes us further along the **path of change and restoration** that is the **essence of the recovery process** (Ephesians 4:22-24).

Remember, substance abuse and other forms of acting out are a symptom of **deeper issues**. Without change, these issues remain intact and continue to have a negative impact - ultimately leading us back to old ways, over time. In order to remain in sustainable, productive recovery, the **forces that have been maintaining addiction** must be **dismantled**.

Recovery is a process of **renewing** our hearts and minds, **freeing** ourselves from old, self-defeating patterns, and **developing** a healthy, new recovery-based identity.



Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord.
Lamentations 3:40



You were taught with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.
Ephesians 4:22-24

STEP 4 GUIDELINES

A WRITTEN PROCESS

Step 4 is a **written exercise**. Writing is a **valuable therapeutic tool** that helps us to **focus**, to **express ourselves** more thoughtfully, to **understand** things more clearly, and to **access repressed memories and feelings**.

To work Step 4, you will need an **A4 exercise book or writing (exam) pad and file**. Follow the **Step 4 Outline** in the next section, completing the **reading and answering the questions** to the best of your ability, **one chapter at a time**.

Leave a **wide margin** on each page so that you have **space to add additional thoughts** and realisations. **Avoid erasing**, crossing out or editing your inventory after completing a section.

CHAPTER ONE: COMPREHENDING STEP 4

MORAL INVENTORY

An **inventory** is a **complete list of items**. The word is usually used with reference to the **written account** of a shop's merchandise, an organisation's resources or a property's contents.

Our Step 4 inventory is much the same in that it is a **full, inclusive record of ourselves**, documenting both our **assets** and **liabilities**. **Assets** are **positive patterns** of believing, thinking, feeling, choosing, relating and doing that **serve us and others well**. **Liabilities** are **negative patterns** of being that have been **self-defeating and unproductive** in the past. These are the ways of believing, thinking, feeling, choosing, relating and doing that we would be **better off without** (1 Corinthians 13:11).



When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things.
1 Corinthians 13:11



So, clean house!
Rid yourselves of all malice and deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander of any kind. Like new born babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that, by it, you may grow up in your salvation; now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.
1 Peter 2:1-3

Many of us have carried **childhood coping mechanisms** into adulthood where they are no longer appropriate or functional. Such dysfunctional coping strategies end up **hindering our development** into mature, emotionally healthy adults.

If we were a property owner, we would have no problem **cleaning house**, i.e., taking stock of the contents and state of that property and then **deciding what is suitable to keep, what is no longer useful, and what is in need of repair**. Taking **our own personal inventory** should be approached with the **same attitude**. The aim is **improvement and restoration**.

Remember that, as believers, our walk towards wholeness is an **ongoing process** that involves both **justification** by God and **sanctification** (becoming more like Christ through the continuous work of the Holy Spirit). Step 4 is **not intended to break us down**, but rather **build us up** (Acts 20:32).

The point is to figure out **what about us works and what doesn't** so that we can walk into our **true potential and purpose**.

The word **moral** can make some people feel defensive, as it is often mis-associated with legalism and judgement. In fact, **morals are simply values**. They are **positive standards of behaviour** that we would like to live by in recovery, such as honesty, integrity, humility and self-respect. It is likely that, in addition, **we compromised our own intrinsic morals** (even if we didn't have a definitive understanding of them at the time).



Now I commit you to God and to the word of His grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.
Acts 20:32

1.1. Which **morals and values** are important to you **and why**?

1.2. How have you **compromised these principles** in the past?

If we find it difficult to define what our personal value system is, we can look to the Bible for **guidance**. God's Word is supreme and eternal. It is the highest authority providing us with a perfect **blueprint for living well**. Biblical values **protect us** and **enrich our collective lives**.

As we explore the scriptures, we will find **wisdom and direction** (2 Timothy 3:16-17).



All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

SEARCHING

In this context, **searching** means to **look at ourselves carefully and honestly, beyond the denial** that we have used to hide the truth about ourselves from ourselves (Psalm 139:23-24).

As we have learnt in Step 1, **denial** is a common psychological coping strategy. It is a subconscious defence mechanism that we use to protect ourselves from uncomfortable realities.

Denial is the phenomenon that **blinds us to painful truths about ourselves**. The pay-off of denial is that we don't have to face up to our problems or take responsibility for fixing them.

Denial manifests in different ways and can be easily masked.

Some **forms of denial** are:

Simple Denial: Pretending that something doesn't exist when it actually does.

Minimising: Acknowledging a problem but refusing to admit to its severity.

Blaming: Recognising that there is a problem but blaming someone else for its manifestation.

Excusing: Believing excuses, rationalisations and justifications for behaviour.

1.3. In what ways have you **hidden from the truth** in the past?

1.4. How have you **avoided facing reality**?

1.5. How have you **minimised, excused, justified and rationalised** your behaviour?

1.6. What **happens** when you deny reality?



Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Psalm 139:23-24

Imagine entering a dim house with a torch. The house represents our heart, mind and spirit. The torch is the objective truth. Step 4 requires that we meticulously **illuminate every corner of every room in the house**, bringing the **truth about ourselves** (our experiences, beliefs, attitudes, thoughts, feelings, behaviours, choices and motives) **into the light** (Ephesians 5: 8-10).



For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord.
Ephesians 5:8-10

The aim is to **reveal a complete, clear portrait** of ourselves. The more **accurate and comprehensive** this portrait is, the **more effective** the Step 4 process will be in the end.

1.7. Why is it **so important to address denial and face the reality** of yourself and your situation?

1.8. How does Step 4 **help you** in a process of **sanctification**?

FEARLESS

For our Step 4 to be as accurate and comprehensive as possible, **absolute honesty and vulnerability** is vital.

Absolute honesty means that we **tell the truth** and **do not omit** anything that should be included. It requires us to **expose all facets of ourselves**, including those aspects that are **uncomfortable, painful, suppressed and/or shameful** (Ephesians 4:25).

The idea of **opening up and owning up** in this way produces fear for most people. This is why Step 4 calls on us to be **fearless**. **Fearless means that we move ahead**, despite apprehension and anxiety, to **face our shadow side** and to **uncover** that which may still be unknown to us (1 John 1:5). As we begin Step 4, we can **counter our fears with God's promises to strengthen and protect us** (Joshua 1:9).

Searching and fearless does not mean that our Step 4 inventory must be perfect. There is **no such thing as a perfect Step 4**. What is required is that we do our level best, applying the recovery principles of **honesty and diligence**.



What this adds up to, then, is this: no more lies, no more pretence. Tell your neighbour the truth. In Christ's body, we're all connected to each other, after all. When you lie to others, you end up lying to yourself.
Ephesians 4:25



This is the message we have heard from Him and declare to you: God is light; in Him there is no darkness at all.
1 John 1:5



Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.
Joshua 1:9

1.9. Do you have any **fears or reservations** (feelings of resistance) about Step 4?

1.10. How can you **overcome these barriers**?

- 1.11. What does the **Bible say about fear**?
- 1.12. **Who will support you** as you write your inventory?
- 1.13. How will you **invite God** into this process?
- 1.14. At this point, it is helpful to write a **Step 4 prayer**.

STEP 4 PRAYER


OF OURSELVES

Step 4 is an inventory **of ourselves**. It is **not the point** to focus on the **flaws or wrongdoings of others**. If we do this, we will **miss the opportunity** for change and growth that Step 4 provides. Regarding other people, our inventory is where we examine and **take responsibility for our own contributions and behavioural consequences** (i.e., our own part) instead of blaming external circumstances.

Many of us have **adopted coping mechanisms** to help us to deal with life which are, in fact, **dysfunctional**. These survival strategies don't bring us any good and aren't good for others either. It is likely that these coping mechanisms have become **so much a part of who we are** that we are **unaware of them and the negative impact** that they have in our lives.

Step 4 is an opportunity to **identify the dysfunctional aspects of our character** (i.e., our shortcomings) and **replace them with constructive alternatives**. The reward of this is **positive change**.

Because our **ways of behaving, choosing, relating, thinking, feeling and believing** are intricately interwoven, we need to look out for not only **maladaptive behaviours** but also **irrational thinking patterns** and **flawed beliefs** about ourselves and the world.



**Instead of your shame,
you will receive a
double portion and
instead of disgrace,
you will rejoice in
your inheritance.**
Isaiah 61:7

- 1.15. Are you **willing to consider your own part** in situations?
- 1.16. How does **pride keep you** from taking responsibility for your behaviour?
- 1.17. What is the **importance of Step 4** in relation to your recovery?
- 1.18. **What could you gain** through the Step 4 process?

Cognitive Behaviourism teaches us that our **actions and behaviours are driven by our thoughts and feelings** which in turn are an **outcome of our core beliefs and attitudes**. Flawed beliefs arise out of our **experiences** and the ways in which we **interpret** them.

For example, if as a child, we were reprimanded whenever we expressed negative emotions, we may now believe that expressing negative emotions will lead to rejection. As a result, we may repress our feelings, become isolated and depressed over time and choose to self-medicate to cope.

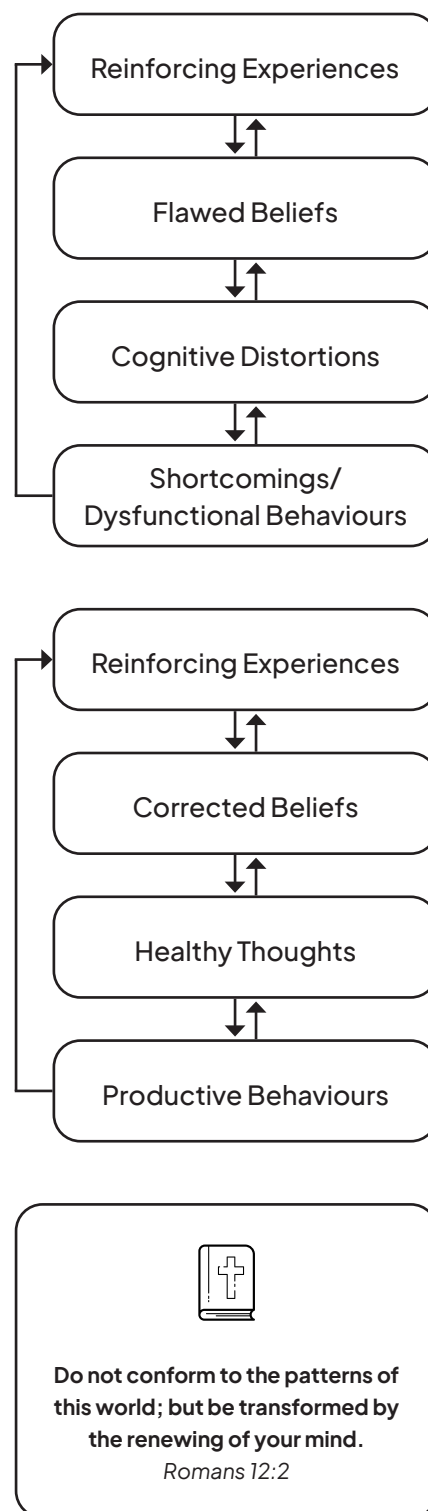
Dysfunctional patterns of behaviour such as this lead to **experiences** that further **reinforce flawed cognitive systems** in a never-ending **cycle**.

To resolve our **dysfunction and our shortcomings**, re-evaluating **our thinking patterns** and correcting **flawed beliefs** is imperative (Romans 12:2).

We can correct flawed beliefs through both **self-appraisal** and through **new experiences** that provide us with **alternative reference points**.

When completing your inventory, **look out** for the following:

- Dishonesty
- Fear
- Self-centeredness
- Victim mentality
- Approval-seeking
- People-pleasing
- Codependency
- Indifference
- Arrogance
- Irresponsibility
- Unforgiveness
- Self-sufficiency
- Procrastination
- Perfectionism
- Suppressing emotions
- Low self-esteem
- Judgement
- High expectations
- Duplicity
- Control
- Self-pity
- Passivity
- Pride
- Self-will
- Isolation
- Intolerance
- Prejudice
- Resentment
- Disrespect
- Blaming
- Manipulation
- Negativity
- Avoidance
- Jealousy
- Comparison
- Poor self-care



SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE: OPEN-MINDEDNESS

For a Step 4 process to be worthwhile, we must approach it with **open-mindedness**. Open-mindedness makes the **opportunity for positive change possible** (Proverbs 4:6-7).

Being open-minded means **being willing to consider new perspectives and to challenge those currently in place**. It means **forgoing pride, defensiveness and emotional sensitivity for the benefit of self-awareness and personal growth**. Open-mindedness acknowledges that, as human beings, we are never perfect. There is always **room for improvement**.

SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES: COURAGE AND COMMITMENT

Step 4 takes **time, effort and courage**. It is **not easy** to relive past hurts and acknowledge our weaknesses. Time spent in the process should be intentionally and strategically managed. To ensure that we **do not procrastinate**, it is helpful to **commit to a specific time** each day or week to dedicate to the process.

Completing our inventory is empowered when we **invite God** in, **asking Him** for guidance, insight and protection and **relying on Him** for the perseverance and resilience that Step 4 requires.

When we feel our strength failing, we can look up and remember that **God is faithful**. As our Creator, He desires the very best for us. He wants to support us in positive processes of change and is able to **strengthen us** with supernatural **capacity and resolve**.

1.19. How will you **make time** for your inventory? Which **specific time** each day or week can you dedicate to this process? What things can you do to **keep yourself focused**?

1.20. How is your decision to work Step 4 a **demonstration** of courage and commitment?

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: IDENTIFYING YOUR EMOTIONS

It is **critical to include emotions** in your Step 4, and to be **specific about your feelings**. Many of us have **frozen feelings**, meaning that we have learned to hide or repress our emotions. Such repression is unhealthy, often leading to **resentment, depression, and self-medicating behaviours**.

You can use the **Feelings Chart** at the end of this chapter to help you **identify your feelings more precisely**.

When uncomfortable, painful or disturbing emotions surface, **press on**. Keep writing. **Facing feelings** is one of the **therapeutic benefits** of the Step 4 process. If you become overwhelmed by your emotions, **reach out** to a member of your support system. **Talk** about how you are feeling. **Seek God**. **Pray for courage, strength to persevere and His hand of protection** over you.



Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you. The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom. Though it cost you all you have, get understanding.

Proverbs 4:6-7



Create in me a pure heart, God, renew a right spirit within me.

Psalms 51:10

It is inevitable for both positive and negative memories to be stirred during this process. Some of these memories may be painful. Remember that the purpose of Step 4 is **not to dwell on the past**. Your inventory is a **reflection tool** to help you understand and review your **current patterns** with the aim of facilitating a **better future**.

1.21. Which feelings do you have the **most trouble allowing yourself to feel**?

1.22. **How** have you **avoided facing** your feelings in the past?

1.23. **What can you do** to make sure that you include and be specific about your feelings when working Step 4?

1.24. If you feel overwhelmed by your emotions, **who will you contact for support**?

FEELINGS CHART

HAPPY	Satisfied Encouraged Glad Pleased Amused Enthusiastic Optimistic	Excited Energetic Cheerful Elevated Jovial Playful Exhilarated	Delighted Joyful Elated Euphoric Blissful Ecstatic Thrilled	POWERFUL	Creative Inspired Intelligent Focused Daring Determined Courageous	Worthwhile Capable Proud Appreciated Confident Valued Bold
SAD	Discontented Dissatisfied Disappointed Discouraged Disillusioned Deflated Downcast Subdued Uncomfortable	Melancholic Defeated Dejected Sorrowful Morose Distressed Dispirited Demoralised Troubled	Depressed Miserable Distraught Grieving Devastated Hopeless Desolate Woeful Anguished	HURT	Let down Wounded Mistreated Embarrassed Depreciated Humiliated Mocked	Used Marred Abused Discarded Degraded Damaged Tortured
ANGRY	Irritated Annoyed Irked Uptight Offended Frustrated Agitated Indignant Provoked Affronted	Aggravated Exasperated Hostile Resentful Confrontational Argumentative Defensive Antagonistic Belligerent Irate	Furious Enraged Outraged Hateful Bitter Aggressive Destructive Violent Vindictive Spiteful	CONFUSED	Distracted Undecided Unsettled Puzzled Ambivalent Disturbed Stumped	Baffled Rattled Startled Confounded Shocked Speechless Stunned Thrown
AFRAID	Bewildered Perplexed Overwhelmed Nervous Apprehensive Hesitant Timid Uneasy Unsure Disquieted	Anxious Worried Distressed Fearful Tense Worried Threatened Scared Frightened Alarmed	Terrified Exposed Persecuted Victimised Trapped Paranoid Desperate Panicked Petrified Frantic	INADEQUATE	Belittled Awkward Submissive Weak Vulnerable Judged Intimidated Insecure Unimportant	Deficient Shamed Inferior Worthless Useless Incompetent Incapable Insignificant
REJECTED	Misunderstood Neglected Excluded Minimized Devalued	Estranged Isolated Lonely Abandoned Alienated	Forsaken Ostracized Outcast Shunned Unloved	REMORSEFUL	Sheepish Flustered Contrite Penitent Guilty Regretful	Apologetic Sorry Ashamed Mortified Disgraced Repentant
PEACEFUL	Content Thoughtful Loving Grateful Trusting	Relaxed Controlled Responsible Meditative Sentimental	Accepted Loved Safe Hopeful Faithful	REPELLED	Disapproving Critical Astonished Dismayed	Appalled Shocked Disgusted Horriified Violated

CHAPTER TWO: RELATIONSHIPS

The quality of our personal relationships has an immense **impact on our mental and emotional well-being**. We are designed to connect with others in community. **Strong, healthy relationships** bring us security, stability, belonging, meaning, and joy. **Toxic, broken, or lost relationships** can cause us deep hurt, sadness, confusion, anger, disappointment, regret and guilt, amongst many other uncomfortable emotions.

Often the damage caused within the context of relationships is **not properly processed**. We are left with **painful feelings** and **flawed beliefs** that have a **significant effect** on our **behaviour**. This is why processing our relationships, past and present, is a **primary focus** of a Step 4 inventory.

2.1. Write about your **personal relationships and memorable interactions with others**. This includes relationships with **family members, friends, partners, colleagues, teachers, pastors, mentors** and anyone else who has played a **significant role** in your life. All relationships **that you have thoughts or feelings about** are important to include – even if the relationship only lasted a day.

NB: This chapter also includes your relationship with **God and with yourself**.

- Structure each relationship account in a **story form**. As with any story, start at the beginning and end with the current status of the relationship.
- Describe the **progression** and **nature** of the relationship.
- Detail any **significant events**.
- Identify your **feelings** towards the relationship and in **response to significant events**.
- Examine the **positive and negative aspects** of the relationship.
- Reflect on your own **behaviour** and motives.
- Analyse your **core beliefs** about the relationship and how these beliefs and attitudes **impacted the relationship**.
- Conclude with **any realisations** that you now have about the relationship.
- If a relationship has been intimate, clarify the nature of your sexual relationship. Many of us have distorted ideas about sex and act out accordingly in ways that can hurt us. In each relationship, ask yourself **where you may have done this**.

Some important considerations relating to sexual relationships:

- Did you ever say ‘yes’ when you wanted to say ‘no’?
- Did you ever compromise your values or self-respect?
- Did you ever confuse sex and love?
- Did you ever use, abuse or harm another in order to meet your own sexual needs?

2.2. Reflect on your personal relationships.

- Note the **recurring themes**
- What has **your part** been in perpetuating negative patterns?
- How have your beliefs, thoughts and emotions **impacted your significant relationships**?
- Which **shortcomings** are most often at play in your relationships?

CHAPTER THREE: RESENTMENTS

Resentment is **bitterness** towards another whom we **perceive** has **harmed us** or **treated us unfairly**.

Feelings of resentment can result from any situation in which a **sense of injustice or wrongdoing is felt** (e.g., feeling abused, humiliated, unrecognised, undermined, rejected, unsupported or taken advantage of) and where that **hurt and anger goes unexpressed or unprocessed** (i.e., it is left to fester).

Because it is a predominantly internalised emotion, resentment causes us **intense discomfort**. When left unresolved, it can have **powerful, debilitating effects** psychologically, emotionally, spiritually, relationally and physically. Resentments can easily become a **barrier to personal growth**, inhibiting prospects for us to find true freedom from old patterns (Ecclesiastes 11:10).

We cannot hold on to resentments and find healing at the same time. Even where we may have a legitimate reason to feel resentful, we **must find a way to let go**.

Resentment does **not punish anyone but oneself**, doing **far more damage to the one resenting** than the one who is resented. Living with resentment will **never change the heart of another**. It will only **harden our own**. This is why learning to deal with resentment in a healthy way is a **critical part of our recovery process**.



So, remove grief and anger from your heart and put away pain from your body, because childhood and the prime of life are fleeting.
Ecclesiastes 11:10

- **On a scale of 1–10, how much does resentment negatively affect your life?**

1 indicates little negative effect. 10 indicates severe negative impact.



3.1. Create a list of all the **people and principles** that you resent.

This includes:

- **Individuals**, from childhood to the present day, e.g., parents, friends, associates, acquaintances, partners, colleagues
- **Groups and organisations**, e.g., jails, hospitals, churches, schools
- **Concepts and movements**, e.g., religion, politics, prejudice

Use the following questions to guide you in the construction of your list:

- Who or what do you feel bitterness towards?
- Who has hurt you that you still feel harmed by today?
- Who do you struggle to feel positive feelings towards?
- Who are you critical of or judgemental towards?

3.2. For each person and principle, **explain the cause** of the resentment:

- What **happened**?
- How did the situation **make you feel**?
- **Why** do you think it made you feel this way?
- What are your **beliefs** about this person / situation / principle / organisation?

E.g., I resent my manager, John, because he never listens to what I have to say. This makes me angry because I feel invalidated. It affects my self-esteem and motivation at work. My belief is that John doesn't respect me.

3.3. For each resentment, **identify your role / contribution / part**. Remember, identifying your own part does not excuse others of their wrongs. It means that you see and take responsibility for **your side of the street**.

E.g., my part in the situation is that I have never communicated how I feel to John. I have not been assertive and explained the impact on me because of fear of his reaction. I have let the resentment build without taking action to rectify it.

Try to **overlook the flaws of others** and instead **focus on your own portion**.

For each resentment **consider these questions**:

- Is there any part of this situation that I could have misinterpreted?
- Is there any part of the resentment for which I am responsible?
- Could the resentment be partly a result of my own
 - High Expectations? Pride? Fear? Entitlement?
 - Lack of communication? Intolerance? Shame? Unforgiveness?
 - Guilt? Self-centeredness?
- For what can I accept partial culpability?
- To what extremes have I unnecessarily carried this resentment?

Tip: It can be **especially therapeutic and cathartic** to write resentments as if **addressing the person** or principle directly. e.g. "John, I resent you because you never listen to what I have to say . . ."

NB: If you have been in an abusive relationship, especially as a small child, you can find great freedom in this part of your inventory. As you see that you had **no part** and **do not need to take any responsibility** for the **cause** of the resentment, much **misplaced guilt and shame** may be addressed. Then it will be **up to you** to decide – will you **continue to carry the resentment** or choose a **process of forgiveness**?

3.4. Note the **recurring themes** in your resentments.

3.5. Explain **how your resentments interfere** with your life.

CHAPTER FOUR: SHAME AND GUILT

Situations around which we feel guilt and shame are some of the hardest to write about. However, unwillingness to face such feelings can be a stumbling block in recovery. This is because **guilt and shame are often drivers of maladaptive behaviour** and can perpetuate the Cycle of Addiction.

When writing about guilt and shame, take note of the fact that, although many people use the words **guilt** and **shame** interchangeably, they refer to **two different experiences**.

GUILT is related to **things that we have done** and is tied to beliefs about what is right and wrong. It is the **regret and remorse** that we feel when **we have done** something that goes against our own values. True guilt, relating to **actions for which we are responsible**, is appropriate and **can be productive**, if it elicits a constructive response which seeks to mend the damage done (**repentance**).

SHAME is related to **how we feel about who we are**. It is a painful **feeling of inadequacy, inferiority, or self-loathing**, which is tied to **beliefs about our worth**. Shame can be **extremely unproductive**, with **negative implications** for self-image, self-esteem and behaviour.

When shame persists to become a core experience of self, we refer to it as **chronic, or toxic, shame**.

People suffering with chronic shame may be conscious of their feelings, usually resulting in **depression and anxiety**, or unconscious of them, leading to **extreme, self-defeating behaviours** and/or **masking**.

Toxic shame often results when we **accept responsibility for situations that were not our fault** (e.g., sexual, physical or emotional abuse; retrenchment; parents' divorce; a partner's infidelity; attachment trauma; bullying, etc.) or when we **allow guilt to be unreasonably perpetuated**.

In Step 4, we **unpack our guilt and shame** so that we can **separate** the two. The aim is to identify **what we need to own** and **what is not ours to carry**.

- **On a scale of 1-10, how much does guilt and shame negatively affect your life?**

1 indicates little negative effect. 10 indicates severe negative impact.

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩



“The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion – to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.

Isaiah 61:1-3

- 4.1. **Which situations** do you feel guilt and / or shame about?
- 4.2. How have these feelings of guilt and shame **affected other aspects of your life?**
- 4.3. In each of these situations, what are you **responsible for?**
- 4.4. Which situations require you to **make amends?**
- 4.5. Which situations have caused you to **unreasonably feel shame?** (Have you blamed yourself for another person's wrongs?)
- 4.6. Which situations do you need to **forgive yourself** for?
- 4.7. Which situations do you need to process in order to **release yourself** from undue or inappropriate shame?

CHAPTER FIVE: SELF-CENTEREDNESS

When we are self-centred, we are entitled. We **focus on our own wants and needs, expecting them to be met** without considering the wants and needs of others. We **lack empathy** and fail to consider situations from other perspectives. We don't assess how our **behaviour impacts those around us**. We place **unrealistic demands on others** and feel victimised and resentful when they don't meet our expectations.

- **On a scale of 1-10, how much does self-centeredness negatively affect your life?**

1 indicates little negative effect. 10 indicates severe negative impact.

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

5.1. How have you **behaved self-centredly**?

5.2. In what ways have you been **entitled**?

5.3. When and how have you acted out of **pride, vanity or superiority**?

5.4. When and how have you **blamed others** for your own behaviour?

5.5. What makes you **jealous or envious**?

5.6. What **unrealistic demands** have you placed on others?

5.7. When have you put your **wants and needs** before the wants and needs of others?

5.8. How have you **typically reacted** when your needs and wants were not met?

5.9. How do you consider how your **behaviour affects others**?

CHAPTER SIX: FEAR

Fear is an **underlying cause** of many forms of **personal discomfort**. If we look closely, we are likely to find that **fear, doubt and insecurity have been at the core** of much of our behaviour, keeping us from becoming the people that we actually want to be.

Fear is what we experience when we perceive that we **aren't in control** of a situation and our **physical or emotional security is threatened**. It is often our first response to something new or unfamiliar.

Fear **limits our ability to realistically assess our options**. It prevents us from being able to effectively resolve challenges and anxieties. When fear is present, our **tendency to deny, ignore and avoid** is increased. Our **flawed beliefs become exaggerated** and **emotional responses are intensified**. As a result, we may adopt **maladaptive coping mechanisms** that have a significant impact on the way that we **pattern our lives**.



For God did not give us a spirit of timidity or cowardice or fear, but [He has given us a spirit] of power and of love and of sound judgment and personal discipline [abilities that result in a calm, well-balanced mind and self-control].

2 Timothy 1:7

For example, **many of us fear disapproval, criticism and rejection**. To counter such fears, we may adopt dysfunctional approval-seeking, people-pleasing and care-taking behaviours, constantly seeking out validation from others and attempting to manage their opinions of us. As a result, we may ignore our own needs, lose our sense of identity and remain in relationships that are destructive.

Fear of abandonment may result in intense feelings of insecurity and codependent behaviours, whilst **fear of authority** may result in reactive rebellion and arrogance.

- **On a scale of 1-10, how much does fear negatively affect your life?**
1 indicates little negative effect. 10 indicates severe negative impact.

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6.1. List situations and experiences in which fear is a problem for you.

E.g., fear of rejection in relationships; fear of abandonment; fear of responsibility at work; fear of commitment; fear of growing up; fear of failure; fear of life without using; fear of socialising; fear of a parent.

6.2. For each, describe:

- the **reasons** for your fear
- the **impact on your thoughts, feelings and behaviour**
- how this fear **inhibits growth** and **generates further fear**

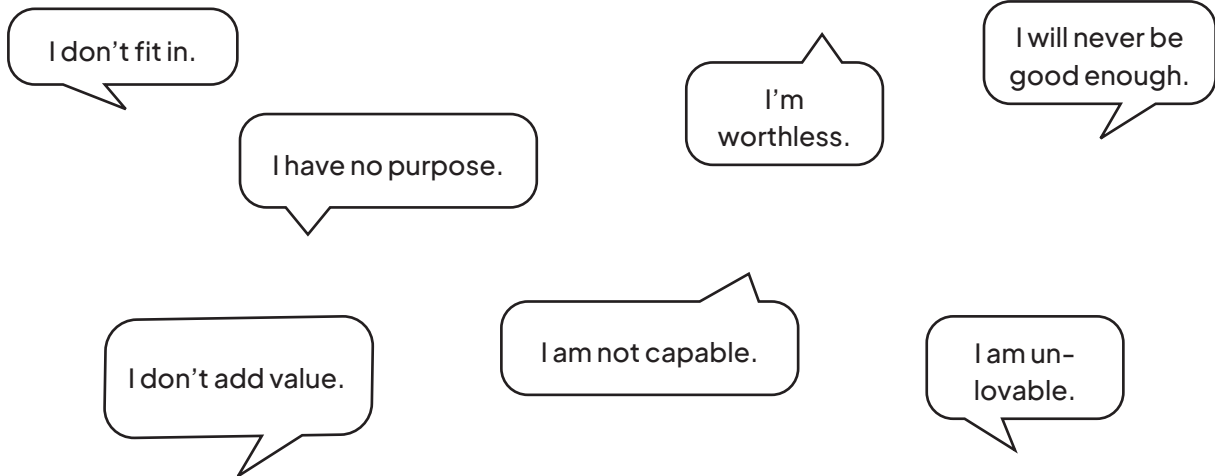
E.g., I fear failure because I am afraid that if I fail I will be rejected and humiliated. Because I fear failure, I prefer not to try anything new or challenging. These situations make me feel incredibly anxious and I practice avoidance. This reinforces my belief that I am not capable and makes me feel worthless. Feeling worthless activates other fears of rejection, abandonment and inadequacy.

6.3. For each fear, **assess its rationality** (whether the fear is **reasonable or not**) and **possible origins** (causes).

CHAPTER SEVEN: SELF-WORTH

When we experience low self-worth, we feel **inadequate, inferior, incapable, undeserving, unimportant, or worthless**. It is also common to be consumed by **comparison, negative self-talk** and **self-hatred**, which can leave us feeling defeated and depressed.

As a result of low self-worth, we may **avoid opportunities for growth** and **easily fall** into destructive relationships, isolation or self-medicating behaviours - all of which affect our ability to live up to our true potential.



- On a scale of 1-10, how much does low self-worth negatively affect your life?

1 indicates little negative effect. 10 indicates severe negative impact.

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

7.1. Which **experiences and situations** evoke low self-worth for you?

7.2. Which **experiences in the past** have caused you to feel low self-worth?

7.3. Which **core beliefs** about yourself and others cause you to feel low self-worth?

7.4. How does low self-worth affect your **behaviour**?

7.5. How **rational** are your core beliefs and feelings of inadequacy or inferiority?

7.6. What evidence in your life **disputes negative beliefs** about your self-worth, e.g., a partner that loves you, or parents that support you.

7.7. What is **God's view** of your worth? (Psalm 139:13-14)



For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

Psalm 139:13-14

CHAPTER EIGHT: SECRETS

Secrets keep you sick is a phrase often repeated in recovery. This is because it is true. Secrets trap us in **destructive cycles** of fear, guilt, shame, uncertainty and dishonesty, distorting our views and **inhibiting our ability to engage authentically** with the world. On a subconscious level, secrets continue to haunt us and keep us **in hiding**.

To achieve authenticity in recovery and true freedom from the culture of addiction, we **must be willing to become completely transparent** with people who can support us. Bringing to the surface and sharing all those **unspeakable things** that we have kept buried for so long is the first step towards healing from them.

8.1. Are there any experiences, deeds, thoughts, feelings or beliefs that you **have not written about** in this inventory and that you **have never been completely honest about** before? What are they?

CHAPTER NINE: ASSETS

We are all made up of both weaknesses and **strengths**. We gain humility when we honestly acknowledge that we are human beings, **neither perfectly good nor perfectly bad**. In this chapter, we focus on our assets, i.e., those **parts of ourselves that are useful or valuable**.

This is an incredibly important aspect of Step 4. Our assets show us that we are not **bad** people, as we may have believed or been told. As we progress in our recovery journey, we can look forward to more and more of our assets shining through.

If you cannot identify any assets right away, look harder. If you are **searching**, you **will realise your positive characteristics**, as well as **ideals to strive towards**.

The following list of assets may be helpful:

- Willingness
- Humility
- Forgiveness
- Gratitude
- Open-mindedness
- Commitment
- Faith
- Diligence
- Empathy
- Courage
- Honesty
- Kindness

9.1. Identify your positive character strengths in the following areas:

a) Emotional

Healthy feelings towards yourself and others, e.g., I am able to feel and express love for my children / I am talking about my feelings / I am less critical of myself / I am hopeful.

b) Spiritual

Meaningful ways in which you relate to God, e.g., I have strong faith in God's love for me / I am attending church and reading God's Word / I am saved / I am blessed.

c) Relational

Positive and supportive interactions with others, e.g., I have put strong boundaries in place with my old using friends / I am involved in a recovery community / I am being of service.

d) Principles

Practice of wholesome values and morals, e.g., I am committed to honesty and transparency in my recovery / I am intentional about focusing on gratitude / I am humble.

e) Self-Care

Concern for and nurturing of self, e.g., I take time out for rest and relaxation / I am looking after myself physically through a balanced diet and regular exercise / I am improving my self-awareness.

f) Behavioural

Focus on productive behaviour patterns and constructive change, e.g., I am working towards self-improvement / I am committed to sobriety and making lifestyle changes / I am creative / I am kind.

- 9.2. **Add** any other assets that you can think of. What **qualities and traits** do you possess that you like? What are you **good at**?
- 9.3. Think back over your life and **recall occasions, achievements or personal characteristics** that you are proud of.
- 9.4. Which **spiritual principles** are you currently practicing in your life?
- 9.5. How has your life **changed for the better** in recovery?
- 9.6. What **goals** have you accomplished? What other goals do you have and what **actions are you taking** to reach them?
- 9.7. How has your **faith in and relationship with God** grown?

CHAPTER TEN: ONWARDS AND UPWARDS

The purpose of Step 4 is to **help us see the truth**. Truth is the opposite of denial. Denial keeps us trapped in chaotic, destructive cycles. Truth restores sanity to our lives. By putting the truth in writing, we show that we are **ready to face reality**, perhaps for the first time, and are willing to **do whatever it takes to change** for the good.

Many people who have walked the Step 4 journey before us are able to testify to the **liberating insight** that this process **empowers us** with – if we have put in our best effort (Proverbs 4:6-7).

- **On a scale of 1-10, how much does low self-worth negatively affect your life?**

1 indicates little negative effect. 10 indicates severe negative impact.

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

10.1. Have you **included everything** that is important to include?

10.2. What have been your most **significant realisations** in Step 4?

10.3. How could you apply the principles of Step 4 to help you **throughout** your recovery journey?

10.4. Are you **ready to move on** to Step 5?

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